

USDA Foreign Agricultural Service

GAIN Report

Global Agricultural Information Network

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Costa Rica

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Increase in pork consumption encourages the pork producers' sector i

Report Categories:

Livestock and Products

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Report Highlights:

The growth in Costa Rica's pork consumption is partly due to producers' work to improve meat quality. However, there is an excellent market niche to export fine cuts such as pork legs during the second semester of the year.

General Information:**Increase in pork consumption encourages the pork producers' sector in Costa Rica**

In 2009, the annual per capita consumption of pork increased from 8.9 kilograms in 2004 to 11.6 kilograms, 33% more, in Costa Rica. Last year was the best of the last five years although the market faced the AH1N1 (also known as swine fever). The Chamber of Swine Producers invested significantly in publicity and the negative effects were curtailed to only one week. Moreover, the campaigns positively affected consumers and a rise in consumption was seen across the country.

The swine producers report that in 2009, in order to meet domestic demand, there were 45,000 pigs slaughtered per month. However, in 2010, this amount was increased to 55,000 pigs per month. This growth in the Costa Rica's pork consumption is partly due to producers' work to improve meat quality.

Years ago, the value of the animal was quantified by the quantity of fat. Over time, consumer preferences have changed and now consumers expect lean cuts of pork. Another interesting aspect of the Costa Rican market is that traditionally consumers eat more pork ribs, pork chops and pork roast during the first six months of the year and from July to December the demand is focused on the pork leg and fine cuts. As a result of the demand for very specific pork cuts, in the last semester of 2010 the Costa Rican pork industry preferred to import the particular cuts and not slaughtering pigs, which helps avoid the need to freeze cuts that are not currently in demand.

The domestic consumption in Costa Rica may be higher, but price data is not monitored closely. The price to the producer has kept its value as 1,578 colones per kilo (\$3.10/kg) and for the butcher it is approximately 1,720 colones per kilo (\$3.37/kg), but the sales prices could reach up to 150%.

An excellent niche market exists in Costa Rica for fine pork cuts, particularly pork legs.